

IN THE CLAIMS:

Cancel Claim 17 without prejudice, amend Claims 1, 3, 4, 8, 9, 11-16, 18, 19 and 23-26 as follows and add Claims 37-43:

1. (Currently amended) A nonwoven material having an elastic ~~properties~~ property aligned in one direction, comprising:

either one multilayer composite including at least one layer in which an elastic polymer composed of fibers or filaments is ~~made of an elastic polymer are~~ contained,

or ~~of~~ a homogeneous fiber and filament mix in which a portion of the fibers is made from ~~composed of~~ an elastic polymer,

wherein ~~each case~~ at least a ~~larger part~~ predominant amount of the fibers or filaments is aligned in a direction under the application of heat which extends transversely to the direction in which the nonwoven material is elastic.

2. (Original) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 1, wherein the multilayer composite contains elastic meltblown fibers and spunbond fibers.

3. (Currently amended) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim ~~4~~ 2, wherein the elastic ~~meltblown~~ meltblown fibers contain bicomponent fibers having an elastic portion.

4. (Currently amended) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim ~~4~~ 3, wherein the ~~spunbond~~ spunbond fibers are not elastic.

5. (Withdrawn) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 1, wherein the homogeneous fiber mix is composed of a needle felt and/or a spunlaced product to which elastic fibers have been added.

6. (Withdrawn) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 1, wherein a homogeneous fiber mix of a needle felt and/or a spunlaced product is combined with at least one layer of elastic meltdown fibers and/or spunbound fibers.

7. (Withdrawn) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 1, wherein the needle felt and the spunlaced product also include viscose or natural fibers such as cellulose in addition to synthetic fibers.

8. (Currently amended) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 1, wherein one or more ~~meltdown~~ meltblown layers (M) are arranged between one or more spunbond ~~spunbound~~ layers (S), ~~such as in the order SM, SMS, SMMS, SSMMS, SSMMS~~, with the elastomeric layers being contained at least in one meltdown layer.

9. (Currently amended) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 1, wherein the elastic nonwoven ~~layer~~ material is a liquid barrier layer or a particle retention layer.

10. (Original) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 9, wherein the property as a liquid barrier layer or a particle retention layer also remains maintained after drawing or stretching the nonwoven material.

11. (Currently amended) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 1, wherein the product having stretchability amounts to 0-700%, ~~preferably to 50-400%.~~

12. (Currently amended) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 1, wherein the having recovery (recovery property) of the product amounts to at least 60%, ~~preferably to at least 80%,~~ on a two-fold stretching by 100%.

13. (Currently amended) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 1, wherein the having recovery (contracting property) of the product amounts to at least 50%, ~~preferably to at least 70%,~~ on a two fold stretching by 150%.

14. (Currently amended) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 1, wherein it which is breathable.

15. (Currently amended) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 1 ~~or 14~~, wherein it which is hydrophilic.

16. (Currently amended) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 2 ~~4~~, wherein a polymer having elastic properties is used as the meltblown ~~meltblown~~ fiber and having similar flow properties (with respect to the rheological and viscosity properties) as polypropylene.

Claim 17. Canceled

18. (Currently Amended) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 16 47, wherein the meltblown ~~meltdown~~ fibers are composed of the following mixture: more than 60% by weight of a triblock copolymer consisting of 70% by weight of styrene-ethylene/butylene-styrene and 30% by weight of styrene-ethylene/butylene-styrene, where the polystyrene portion of the polymer is 14% by weight (e.g. Kraton G®), 5-35% by weight of polypropylene suitable for processing in ~~the~~ a meltblown method and an anti-blocking agent to improve ~~the~~ flow properties.

19. (Currently amended) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 18, wherein the meltblown fibers are composed of an elastic polyolefine, ~~for example of a metallocene-catalyzed copolymer of the polyethylene and/or polypropylene.~~

20. (Withdrawn) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 18, wherein the meltdown fibers is composed of a thermoplastic elastic polyurethane.

21. (Previously Presented) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 1, wherein, with a multilayer design, in addition to at least one meltblown layer having elastic fibers, spunbond layers made of one of the following materials are present: of polyolefine or polyester, or bicomponent polymer based on polypropylene and polyethylene, or of a polypropylene or polyester mixed with a bicomponent polypropylene/polyethylene or of an elastic polymer such as polyurethane, polystyrene block copolymer or an elastic polypropylene and/or polypropylene.

22. (Original) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 21, wherein the spunbond layers and/or meltblown layers have a different design.

23. (Currently amended) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 1, wherein the layers of the multilayer design are bonded to one another by at least one of needlepunching, spunlacing, ~~by~~ thermobonding, ~~by~~ calendering with smooth rolls and/or engraved rolls and ~~and/or by~~ infrared bonding.

24. (Currently amended) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 2 ~~4~~, wherein the basis weight of the multilayer design amounts to 7 g/m² up to 400 g/m², where the elastic ~~meltblown~~ meltblown layers amount to 1 to 60% by weight.

25. (Currently amended) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 2 ~~4~~, wherein the basis weight of the needle nonwoven/spunlaced product or needle nonwoven together with elastic meltblown layers amounts to 40-700 g/m², where the elastic meltblown layers amount to 1 to 60% by weight.

26. (Currently amended) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 2 ~~4~~, wherein the meltblown layer provided with elastic properties has a fiber thickness of 0.01 to 1.2 denier, ~~preferably 0.01 to 0.5 denier.~~

27. (Withdrawn) A method of manufacturing a nonwoven material in accordance with claim 1, characterized in that the prefabricated nonwoven material web is drawn either in the running direction or transversely to the running direction for the aligning of the fibers/filaments under the application of heat.

28. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with claim 27, wherein the transport speed in the longitudinal direction, measured in %, is lowered by more than the width increase in % to generate the elastic properties of the nonwoven material in the longitudinal direction and the increase of the basis weight belonging thereto.

29. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with claim 27, wherein the width restriction, measured in %, is higher than the increase of the transport speed in the longitudinal direction, measured in %, to generate elastic properties of the nonwoven material in the transverse direction and the increase of the basis weight belonging thereto.

30. (Withdrawn) An apparatus for the carrying out of the method in accordance with claim 1, characterized in that it has an oven and at least one drawing device to draw the nonwoven material web.

31. (Withdrawn) An apparatus in accordance with claim 30, wherein the drawing device to draw the nonwoven material web in the direction transverse to its transport

direction has two wheel-shaped gripping apparatuses arranged to the side of the nonwoven material web and having receiving regions arranged at its periphery to grip the nonwoven material web.

32. (Withdrawn) An apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein the drawing device to draw the nonwoven material web in the direction longitudinal to its transport direction is composed of at least two rolls via which the nonwoven material web is fixed by friction, wherein it is pulled at a speed higher in comparison with the entry speed of the nonwoven material web into the oven so that the nonwoven material web is drawn in the longitudinal direction.

33. (Withdrawn) An apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein the drawing device to draw the nonwoven material web in the direction longitudinal to its transport direction is composed of at least two oppositely disposed rolls between which the nonwoven material web is clamped and which are derivable at a higher peripheral speed than entry speed of the nonwoven material web into the oven so that the drawing of the nonwoven material web in the longitudinal direction takes place.

34. (Withdrawn) An apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein a temperature is set in the oven between the softening point and the melting point of the respectively processed thermoplastic fibers.

35. (Withdrawn) An apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein the drawing/pulling speed of the nonwoven material web amounts to 5-150 m/min, preferably to 40-100 m/min, on the drawing into the width.

36. (Withdrawn) An apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein the processing speed of the nonwoven material web amounts to 5-400 m/min, preferably to 80-250 m/min, on the drawing in the longitudinal direction.

37.(new) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 8, wherein said one or more meltdown layers (M) are arranged between one or more spunbound layers (S) in the order of one of SM, SMS, SMMS, SSMMS, SSMMSS.

38.(new) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 11, having stretchability amounts to 50-400%.

39.(new) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 12, having recovery (recovery property) amounts to at least 80% on a two-fold stretching by 100%.

40.(new) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 13, having recovery (contracting property) amounts to at least 70% on a two fold stretching by 150%.

41.(new) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 18, wherein the polystyrene portion is Kraton G®.

42.(new) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 19, wherein the meltblown fibers are composed of a mettalocene-catalyzed copolymer of the polyethylene and/or polypropylene.

43.(New)A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 26, wherein the meltblown layer provided with elastic properties has a fiber thickness of 0.01 to 0.5 denier.